April 2, 2020

Public Notice for Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects)

State Route 3 Swift Creek Bridge Replacement Project (EA:02-4F220), WDID No. 1A20005WNTR, ECM PIN CW-864258

Trinity County

On January 17, 2020, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification for activities associated with the State Route (SR) 3 Swift Creek Bridge Replacement Project (Project) (Caltrans EA:02-4F220).

Project Location
The Project is located along SR 3 just north of Trinity Center between Airport Road and Rancheria Road in Trinity County, between PM 58.7 and 60.70. The northern portion of the Project is located at latitude/longitude 40.989215 °N, 122.704962 °W. The southern portion of the Project is located at the latitude/longitude 40.984505 °N, 122.707422 °W.

Project Description
The primary purpose of the Project is to address structural deficiencies and scour issues by replacing the Swift Creek Bridge. In addition, the Project includes realignment of the existing roadway, removal of existing culverts, installation of new culverts, and replacement one existing culvert along SR 3. Replacement of the bridge will maintain mobility on SR 3 near Trinity Center in Trinity County. During a 1997 storm event, the water flows reached the existing bridge soffit (bottom chord) and overtopped the roadway just north of the existing bridge. That overtopping event led to a fatality where a vehicle was washed off the roadway. Maintenance crews quickly improvised a new 300 feet (ft.) long dike, following the 1997 storm to redirect roadway overtopping flows under the bridge. This realignment Project will reduce the risk of Swift Creek overtopping the highway during future storm of record events. Public traffic, bikes, and pedestrians will continue to use the existing bridge during the construction of the new bridge. After the new bridge is constructed the old bridge will be removed. Extra fill will be placed beyond the shoulders of the road for Trinity County to install a future bike path.

Proposed construction activities for the new road include clearing vegetation within the new road alignment, then construction of the new road, four new culverts beneath the road, and construction of the bridge. After removal of the existing bridge, pier, roadway, and culverts beneath the roadway, the streambed will be recontoured, and trapezoidal ditches will be installed in place of two former culverts

The Swift Creek Bridge (Location 1) will be on the new alignment and will be a two-span bridge of approximately 198 ft. long with a deck 44 ft. wide, consisting of two 12 ft. wide

lanes and two 8 ft. wide shoulders. It will be constructed approximately 80-ft. downstream of the existing bridge. To keep the abutments out of the channel of Swift Creek the new bridge will have a higher soffit elevation and longer span between abutments

The superstructure of the new bridge will consist of a precast prestressed I-girder bridge over the channel of Swift Creek. The superstructure will be supported by abutments and one column pier. Each abutment will be a high cantilever type, approximately 27 ft. tall, 44 ft. wide, and 1.5 to 3.2 ft. deep with a seat. The footing will be approximately 15 ft. wide, 47 ft. long, and 2.25 ft. deep. The abutments will be above the OHWM of Swift Creek. The pier will be approximately 42 ft. tall and 6 ft. in diameter. The abutments and pier will be founded on cast-in-drilled-hole concrete piles rock socket with a permanent casing approximately 40 ft. long. Rock slope protection (RSP) will be placed along the abutments. The existing rock berm that was added following the 1997 flood event will not be removed or reconstructed.

The existing bridge is 168 ft. long and 28.5 ft. wide with 12 ft. wide lanes and 2 ft. wide shoulders. The existing pavement on the old road alignment will be removed and then seeded/planted. The Project will require vegetation clearing, temporary construction easements, and acquisition of new right-of-way.

PM 60.03 Location 1: Swift Creek is a perennial stream that contains a large floodplain lined by sand, cobble, and boulders. The floodplain of Swift Creek contains scattered riparian, shrubs, and dense upland forest north of the bridge. Swift Creek is a highly braided stream in sections and confined by steep banks in other sections. The width of the stream ranges from 63 ft. to 205 ft. wide. Temporary in-stream work will be required to remove the existing pier (34.50 square feet (sqft.) from the existing bridge and construct the new pier (6 ft. diameter = 18.84 sqft. circumference) for the new bridge. The old and new piers are within the channel of Swift Creek, below the OHWM. Temporary impacts below the OHWM of Swift Creek will be needed for the in-stream clear water diversion, new pier, and to remove the existing pier and the existing south abutment. Temporary impacts to the bank of Swift Creek may be required to remove the existing bridge abutments. RSP will be installed in place of the abutments, (above the OHWM) to prevent erosion and stabilize the bank. Permanent impacts to riparian habitat will occur along Swift Creek to construct the new bridge pier. Temporary impacts to riparian habitat will occur to remove the existing bridge and stage equipment to construct a new bridge.

PM 60.14: This area is within the historic floodplain of Swift Creek with no existing stream, tributary or channel in this location. A culvert will be installed here as passage for wildlife to cross under the new road alignment. This culvert is not jurisdictional and does not require a permit. This new long corrugated arch culvert will be 6.9 ft. wide by 4.8 ft. tall by 156 ft. long. A new RSP ditch 6 ft. wide with a 4:1 slope will convey roadside runoff and flood waters to this arch culvert.

PM 60.18 Location 2: The existing 60 ft. long culvert under the existing roadway will be removed, and a new 6 ft. wide by 60 ft. long RSP lined trapezoidal ditch will replace the culvert. The pavement will be removed from the existing road, and the fill within the bed, bank, and channel of the stream will be removed. Three new 3 ft. diameter by 120 ft. long diameter culverts will be installed under the new road alignment. An RSP pad will be installed at the inlet of the culvert. The stream will be re-directed, downstream of the old culvert, under the new road. The old roadway will be recontoured to allow for revegetation and for overland flow of the streams.

PM 60.23 Location 3: The existing roadway and 1.5 ft. diameter by 50 ft. long culvert under the existing roadway will be removed. The old roadway will be recontoured to allow overland flow of the streams and for revegetation. A new 2 ft. wide by 50 ft. long RSP lined trapezoidal ditch will replace the culvert. One new 2.5 ft. diameter by 121 ft. long corrugated culvert will be installed under the new road alignment. The stream will be re-directed into this new culvert.

PM 60.30 Location 4: The existing 9 ft. diameter by 80 ft. long corrugated culvert at Rancheria Creek will be removed using the cut and cover method. The existing culvert will be replaced with a new 15 ft. wide x 7.3 ft. tall by 100 ft. long bottomless arch corrugated culvert. The new bottomless arch culvert will span the creek and have a natural stream bottom. A new concrete headwall will be installed at the inlet of the culvert. The cut and cover method will be used to replace the culvert.

As many as five staging areas are planned to encompass an area of approximately 1.94 acres of temporary disturbance and located within existing dirt pullouts, dirt roads, or disturbed upland habitat. A borrow site is located near Foster Creek at PM 59.0; however, no dirt will be borrowed from the creek area and no riparian vegetation will be removed. Silt fencing or other erosion control measures will be implemented to avoid soils from migrating towards the stream.

Project Timeline
The Project is planned to begin on December 1, 2020 and end on December 29, 2022. The construction work is planned to last approximately 120 days. Project activity will take place during the wet season in the months of October 15 through May 15; however, all in-stream work will occur during the dry season (June 15 - October 15) when water levels are low or dry.

Receiving Waters
The proposed Project will cause disturbances to waters of the state associated with Rancheria Creek and Swift Creek-Trinity Lake (Previously Trinity River), within the Trinity River Hydrologic Unit (106.00) and the Upper Trinity River Hydrologic Area (106.40).

Project Impacts
Permanent impacts to waters of the state include:

Approximately 282 linear feet of permanent in-stream impacts.
Approximately 6,300 sqft. (0.145 acres) of permanent riparian impacts, including the removal of 35 riparian trees between 6-20 inches dbh.
Temporary impacts to waters of the state include:
Approximately 290 linear feet of temporary in-stream impacts.
Approximately 1,500 sqft. (0.034 acres) of temporary riparian impacts.

Avoidance, Minimization and Mitigation for Project Impacts
The following mitigation has been proposed to offset the permanent impacts to waters and riparian areas.

PM 60.03 Location 1: The new abutments and longer length of the new Swift Creek bridge will fully span the creek, which will allow this braided stream to flow naturally and reduce the erosion problems related to the existing bridge. The new bridge will have one 6 ft. diameter pier within the active channel of Swift Creek with a smaller footprint than the existing pier (increase of 15.66 sqft. of open water). The new pier will be in flowing water only during high flows (winter to spring). Increasing the length of the bridge allows animals to cross under the bridge instead of on the roadway.

PM 60.18 Location 2: An open 60-LF trapezoidal ditch will be created to replace the existing culvert that conveys a small intermittent stream under the roadway. This open channel will allow the stream to flow naturally for an increase of 60 LF of open water.

PM 60.23 Location 3: An open 50-LF trapezoidal ditch will be created to replace the existing culvert that conveys small spring fed perennial stream under the roadway. This open channel will allow the stream to flow naturally for an increase of 50 LF of open water. This stream conveys water into Rancheria Creek which is a tributary of Swift Creek.

These two small streams may be used for migratory passage between breeding and non-breeding aquatic habitat. Opening these two small streams will open a migratory passage between breeding and non-breeding aquatic habitats and may be beneficial to numerous species by providing an aquatic migration corridor for travel between uplands and aquatic habitats.

PM 60.30 Location 4: Removal and replacement of an existing corrugated culvert at Rancheria Creek with a longer bottomless arch culvert and natural stream bottom will improve fish passage, increase the stream span, decrease erosion of the stream banks, and reduce the potential of debris blocking the former culvert.

Removal of invasive, non-native Himalayan blackberry by the root prior to construction of the new road near Rancheria Creek is anticipated to allow natural propagation of existing native vegetation, such as California blackberry, within the riparian zone.

Riparian Revegetation: The Project is anticipated to result in approximately 0.145 acres of permanent impacts to riparian habitat throughout the Project limits, including the removal of 35 trees between 6-20 inches dbh. The Project will mitigate for permanent impacts on-site at a 2:1 ratio for the loss of riparian trees greater than 6-inch DBH. A Revegetation and Monitoring Proposal was provided for the Project. This plan includes planting and seeding on-site of a variety of riparian trees and vegetation on the old road alignment adjacent to the streams at Swift Creek and Rancheria Creek (PM 60.18, PM 60.23) after construction has been completed. Suggested species include beaked hazelnut (*Corylus cornuta*), arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*), narrow leaved willow (*Salix exigua*), mountain dogwood (*Cornus nuttallii*), American dogwood (*Cornus sericea*), and mountain maple (*Acer glabrum*). Planting tubes will be used at the locations of the old bridge abutments to allow trees to grow within the RSP.

The riparian vegetation will be irrigated for the first two years, as needed. The plantings must then be able to survive independently without supplemental watering for a minimum of two years to be considered successful. Success criteria necessary to complete monitoring is survival of 85% of plantings.

Post Construction Stormwater Treatment
Caltrans has submitted a post-construction stormwater mitigation proposal for review and approval.

Other Agency Permits and Actions
Caltrans has applied to the United States Army Corps of Engineers for a Nationwide Permit No. 14 (Non-Reporting) pursuant to section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Additionally, Caltrans has applied for a Streambed Alteration Agreement (1600) from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).

CEQA
On October 30, 2018, Caltrans, as lead agency for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), filed a Mitigated Negative Declaration for a public review period through December 3, 2018. Mitigation measures were made a condition of the approval of the Project. A Notice of Determination was filed with the State Clearinghouse (SCH# 2018102068) for the Project on February 6, 2019 and on June 21, 2019.

Public Comments
Regional Water Board staff are proposing to regulate this Project pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1341) and/or Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act authority. In addition, staff will consider all phone calls and comments submitted in writing and received within a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this notice and ends at 5:00 p.m. on the last day of the comment period. Please contact Susan Stewart at Susan.Stewart@waterboards.ca.gov or (707) 576-2657 within 21 days of the posting of this notice if you have any questions or comments.

The information contained in this public notice is only a summary of the applicant's proposed activities. The Regional Water Board's Project file includes the application for certification and additional details of the proposed Project, including maps and design drawings. Project documents and any comments received are on file and may be reviewed or copied at the Regional Water Board office, 5550 Skylane Boulevard, Suite A, Santa Rosa, California. Appointments are recommended for document review. Appointments can be made by calling (707) 576-2220.

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